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TOWARDS A GREEN SOCIETY

Direct Action Movement

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"For, you must not forget that we can also build. It is we who built those palaces and cities here in Spain and in America and everywhere. We, the workers, can build others to take their place. And better ones. We are not in the least afraid of ruins. We are going to inherit the earth. There is not the slightest doubt about that. The bourgeoisie might blast and ruin its own world before it leaves the stage of history. We carry a new world, here, in our hearts, and that world is growing this minute."

Buenaventura Durruti,
Anarcho-syndicalist metal worker,
Spain, August 5th, 1936.

INTERNATIONAL WORKERS ASSOCIATION

Towards a Green Society

Where does the present ecological crisis come from? This is an important question. Its answer determines our whole worldview and thus our activity. It is essential to consider the crisis in a logical manner and to try to discover the underlying causes of the problem and solve these instead of decrying and trying to solve the numerous effects. Mindless activism does the planet, and ourselves, little long term good and is not sustainable. Equally, superficial analysis of fundamental issues does us and our activity harm as well as mystifying the problems we face.

What is needed is an understanding of the root causes of the ecological crisis and to know the best ways to fight their effects and to remove them once and for all. To do this we need to look at our own society, capitalism (be it "market" capitalism or East European "state" capitalism, better known as "socialism" or "communism"). One of the most important questions to be asked when looking at capitalism is, are the environmental disruptions associated with the rise and current operation of capitalism a side effect caused by ignorance or are they an inherent part of it?

As such we need to investigate capitalism.

Capitalism

Capitalism is based on certain principals. Economically these are private property, competition, wage labour, commodity production and economic growth. Politically it is based on the nation state. Socially, its culture is based on the results of these economic and political principles.

Private property produces a situation where a small minority controls production and land use. For example, in Britain, 7% of the population owns 84% of the wealth. Since ownership signifies control, this means that instead of local people controlling what is produced and, as equally important, how, this power is concentrated in the hands of a few, who often live hundreds of miles away from the effects of their decisions. Hence we see companies closing workplaces to move to more profitable locations or causing pollution without caring about the social or ecological consequences in the local community. Ravenscraig, Caterpillar and the Clydeside ship yards are examples of this as was the case of the chief executive of one of Britains largest builders of tower blocks who destoryed documents detailing construction faults to preserve the financial viability of his company. In the Third World, 5% of the landowners control 70% or more of the crop land. This creates landlessness and hunger as well as cheap (almost slave) labour. The peasants forced

off their land are often forced to farm poor, marginal land to survive, causing soil erosion or deforestation in their struggle to survive. The famines in Ethiopia, for example, were caused by this process (over-population or drought having nothing to do with it). In fact Ethiopia, and most Third World countries, export food products while their people starve.

Competition, far from eliminating monoply, creates it as less competative companies are forced out of business or taken over by more successful ones. This process has lead to the economic (and thus political) domination of the Third World countries by the developed nations. 92% of the world's industry and 95% of its technical resources are owned by the developed countries. The net transfere of wealth from the Third World to the developed world was $52 billion in 1989. The developed nations consume around 75% of the world's resources while being only 25% of the world's population. It also leads to production for the sake of production and to the production of hundreds of products for the market which all do exactly the same job. For example, it is estimated that almost 2,000 new chemical products are put on the world market each year and that about 150,000 different medicines are obtainable. Yet according to the World Health Organisation the vast majority of all known diseases could be treated with about 200 of them. Indeed sometimes the rival products are produced by different parts of the same multi-national company. This obviously leads to a massive waste of resources directly but it also produces a whole industry, advertising, whose job is to make us buy things we don't need and usually use tons of paper and millions of Joules of energy to do so.

Wage labour is a situation were the great majority have no choice but to work for wages since they have no access to the means of life (the land, workplaces, food, housing, etc) due to private property and could not survive otherwise. Labour produces wealth and as well as covering their daily wage the workforce is made to work longer to produce excess wealth inorder to make profit (also called surplus value) for the capitalists who own both the workplaces and the workforce while they are there. Although the workforce leaves this process with nothing but a wage, capital has been enlarged by the surplus value which it takes from the workforce. Hence, through the exploitation of workers capitalism expands and develops.

As well as allowing capital to acculumate, wage labour also alienates the workforce. This is due to them having little or no control over the work they perform or the technology they create through their labour. This technology, although the product of many

generations of social labour, becomes another form of social control and reinforces alienation and powerlessness.

Commodity production is geared for profit, not need. Instead of directly producing goods to meet human needs, it is organised for selling on the market. Human needs are secondary to making money. The market is manipulated to keep profits high by planning scarcity to keep prices at an acceptable level. This leads to food being destoryed or stored into food mountains and lakes while millions across the globe go hungry. If people have no buying power they do not exist on the market. If you can't pay, you can't eat. It is as simple as that under capitalism. Since production is for profit, if it makes more money to pollute, force down wages, re-invest capital in countries with lower labour costs, force peasants off their land and grow cash crops then this will be done. It also reduces people to the level of commodities, to THINGS. The giant Swiss drug company Ciba-Geigy showed this attitude when it sprayed a pesticide called Galecron (which was later linked with cancer) on unprotected Egyptian children to test its safety. The company said it deeply regretted using the children as "volunteers".

Finally there is economic growth (capital acculumation). Capitalism needs to expand in order to survive. Grow or die is its fundamental law and this growth has its own logic, outside the control of capitalists (as a class or as individuals) or any state or government. This growth is also exponential which means a growth rate of 3% implies a doubling of production every 25 years. This is, of course, un-sustainable due to the strain and simplification it would place on the world's eco-systems. As Murry Bookchin makes clear, "Capitalism not only valiadates precapitalist notions of domination of nature by man; it turns the plunder of nature into society's law of life. To quibble with this kind of system about its values, to try to frighten it with visions about the consequences of growth is to quarrel with its very metabolism. One might more easily persuade a green plant to desist from photosynthesis than to ask the bourgeois economy to desist from capital accumulation. There is no one to talk to. Accumulation is determined not by the good or bad intentions of the individual bourgeois, but by the commodity relationship itself....It is not the perversity of the bourgeois that creates production for the sake of production, but the very market nexous over which he presides and to which he succumbs."(1)

So it can be seen that capitalist economic relations produce a system of uncontrollable economic growth, based on production for profit which leads to production for the sake of production. Due to private property a minority, the capitalist class, controls the

economic decisions that effect the lives of millions, both in the workplace and in the community, as well as the planets eco-systems. It also leads to the domination of the Third World by the developed nations and multi-national companies. It also produces a class of people with little or no control over what is produced or how and who are forced to sell their labour to survive, the working class.

The State

The nation state is the political aspect of capitalism. Social institutions do not rise by chance, but are called into being by special needs to serve definite purposes. The capitalist state, as the name implies, was created to protect the economic interests of the capitalist class. No state has ever existed to represent the people, the capitalist state included. As Errico Malatesta explained "The basic function of government everywhere in all times, whatever title it adopts and whatever its origin and organisation maybe, is always that of oppressing and exploiting the masses, of defending the oppressors and exploiters".(2)

The state is based on the centralization of power. It is the sum total of all the political, legislative, judicial, military and financial institutions through which the management of their own lives are taken away from the people and placed into the hands of a minority who can force the people to obey by the use of force. Far reaching decisions that can affect millions are made by small groups, sometimes elected, usually not. The real power in the state, be it a democracy or not, does not lie in the people, nor in their elected representatives (who generally look after their own interests anyway) but in the state bureaucracy; the civil service, the judiciary, the security services, the armed forces, the police and, ultimately, in Big Business. These ensure that the government does not pursue policies that would weaken or destory their, or the capitalists, power. Tony Benn has often spoken of the battles he fought (and lost) against the civil service and the state apparatus when he held ministorial office and of the disinformation fed to him by his "advisers" in Whitehall. In 1984 regulations covering workers handling dangerous chemicals and pesticides were shelved due to opposition from industry. In 1967 the elected reformist Greek government was overthrown by a military coup backed by the United States. The same thing happened to the elected government of Chile in 1973 after the cutting of U.S. aid to almost zero failed. In both cases thousands were murdured by "their" police and military. As Lloyd George said, "Parliament has no control over the executive: it is pure fiction".(3)

The same applies to the United Nations. The U.N. was designed to

safeguard the interests of the dominate powers that won the Second World War. Attempts by the General Assembly to apply International Law equally to all nations has been systematically undermined by the Security Council's full time members and their vetos. The U.N. has only been allowed to operate when the interests of the Western or Eastern power elite are to be safeguarded or increased. The barbaric actions of these countries, or their allies, are ignored and any action to stop their activities stopped. The so-called "new world order" only means that America or any other Western Country may have the backing of the U.N. when it invades or bombs another country.

Even the "good" functions some modern states have are fundamentally an illusion. The rise of the welfare state in Britain in the 1940/50's was an attempt to deflect popular discontent, as was nationalisation. As Quintin Hogg, a Tory M.P., said at the time "if you do not give the people social reforms they are going to give you social revolution". As can be seen, these "social reforms" only served to increase the power of the state and "experts" and did not fundamentally alter the social situation of the great majority of the population. The Welfare state was organised to give doctors and other professionals control over patients and was administered by a top-heavy governmental machine which ran down, with every governments help, the service from the start. In the nationalised industries a whole new elite of managers and controlers was created (many of which were trade union officials). The mass of workers had absolutely no control of their industry and their conditions generally did not improve very much. The extensive house building that occured was used to destory communities and control the population. Local control of new developments was non-existant. The new schools basic function was to develop an educated workforce for the new technology in industry and once this was no longer needed were run-down.

The aid given to Third World countries is also used to further capitalist interests. Most "aid" is in the form of loans which need to be paid back in hard currency. In 1985 African countries recieved $3000 million in emergency aid but had to pay back twice that amount in debts to Western banks. Aid frequently has to be spent on products and services available from the donor country which often ties the aid so that surplus goods which the donor cannot sell on the market can be got rid off. Often "aid" is of a military nature. For example, between 1980 and 1986 the U.S. government sent as "aid" to El Salavador $1¼ Billion for arms, helicopters, naplam and white phosporous bombs. With this "aid" government death squads murdered

20,000 civilians in 1980 alone.

This comes as no major surprise. As Malatesta predicted in 1891, "if it (the state) assumes the role of controller and guarantor of the rights and duties of everyone, it perverts the sentiment of justice...If it appoints itself as the administrator of public services...it looks after the interests of the rulers and the property owners and does not attend to those of the working people...If it assumes the role of teacher, it hampers the propagation of truth and tends to prepare the minds and the hearts of the young to become either ruthless tyrants or docile slaves, according to the class to which they belong. In the hands of government everything becomes a means of exploitation, everything becomes a policing institution, useful only for keeping the people in check."(4)

The attempts of the state to appear "neutral", "democratic" and the people's servant are based on its need for survival. For any state "cannot maintain itself for long without hiding its true nature behind a pretence of general usefulness; it cannot impose acceptance of the priveleges of the few if it does not pretend to be the guardian of the rights of all; it cannot impose respect for the lives of privileged people if it does not appear to demand respect for all human life."(5)

This can be seen to be the case. The legal system proclaims equality before the law, but the judiciary gives lighter sentances to the rich, the military and the police (when it bothers try people like that). The legal system can only be effectively used if you have the money to afford it. The whole system is biased against working class or radical interests. The political system, likewise, is meant to be available to all but few working class people have the money, time or interest to participate as candidates. On an international level, every government in the world signed the declaration of Human Rights, which states that every citizen has a set of fundamental, inalienable human rights such as freedom of speach, assembly, association, to a home, etc, and every government totally ignores it in practice.

Capitalism and the World

Capitalism has produced, on the one hand, a powerful ruling class which does not have any concerns except its own power and profits, and on the other, an alienated, oppressed and exploited working class. While more than 900 million people (around 20% of the world's population) suffer from malnutrition, the governments of the world spend over $17 billion on arms every two weeks. This money could provide adequate food, water, education, health and housing for everyone in the world for a year. This is capitalism. This is its

morality. The ruling class uses the poverty it creates, and its resulting ignorance and apathy, to reinforce its power. It uses colour, nationality, sex, sexuality and anything else to split up and divide the working class into competing sections so that its too busy fighting amongst itself to bother fighting its real enemy the ruling class. As one American capitalist said, "I can hire one half of the working class to kill the other half."

With the expansion of capitalism after the Second World War, it became a market society (as opposed to just an economy). As well as all the old forms of social control it developed consumerism, alienated consumption for the sake of consumption. The alienation experienced by most people is turned in on itself and people, through the influence of advertising, try to buy their way to happiness by consuming. Consumerism takes real human emotions and needs and turns them into commodities to be experienced by buying other commodities. It fails in the end since people do not find satisfaction in consuming products for the problem lies not in not having enough but in boredom. Commodities are no substitue for real human contact and a meaningful life. People are cut off from real communication and participation and spend their time as passive spectators in a world out of their control. Live has passed from being something you do to something you watch other people do. Consumerism is just one aspect of this process.

The ills that afflict humanity and the planet (poverty, war, pollution, sexism, racism, famine and so on) stem from a bad social organisation that allows the exploitation and domination of the world's population and its environment by ruling elites. As can be seen, these elites are more concerned about their profits and power than the social consequences of their rule. Everyone knows about the results of CFC production, the deforestation of the rainforests, nuclear power, car production and other such ecologically damaging practices but capitalists continue to do all these, and worse, in their lust for profit and economic growth. Is it surprising then that this exploitative, degrading and alienating society pits humanity against itself and against nature on a bigger scale than any other in the past.

The present ecological crisis is systemic, it is an inherent part of the capitalist system. It is the DIRECT result of a class and hierarchical based social system.

A system which produces a market society in which everything has a price, is a commodity to be used and exploited for a profit, can only lead to a situation where money and the power that goes with it are more important than life. A system that reduces people to

"labour", animals and nature to "raw materials", views progress as the "domination of nature", considers things (money, factories, toilet rolls) as more important than people, animals and their eco-systems, is based on UNCONTROLLABLE growth, invents built-in obsolescense, plans scarcities of essential goods to keep profits high, loves unneeded diversification and causes massive environmental destruction as part of its routine, daily practice cannot be ecological. It can only be fundamentally ANTI-ecological. Capitalism and the environment are not compatible. Change is needed, but what kind?

Green Consumerism

The notion of "Green" Consumerism is of very little value. Although "green" products are perferable, this strategy, at best, can only delay capitalism's ultimate destruction of its ecological base through its economic growth. Andrew Watson, in that excellent pamphlet "From Green to Red", sums up green consumerism very eloquently as follows: "green consumerism, which is largely a cynical attempt to maintain profit margins, does not challenge capital's eco-cidal accumulation, but actually facilitates it by opening a new market. All products, no matter how "green" cause some pollution, use some resources and energy, and cause some ecological disturbance. This would not matter in a society in which production was rationally planed but in an exponentially expanding economy, production, however "green", would eventually destory the Earth's environment. Ozone-friendly aerosols, for example, still use other harmful chemicals; create pollution in their manufacture, use and disposal; and use large amounts of resources and energy. Of course, up to now, the green pretensions of most companies have been exposed largely as presenting an acceptably green image, with little or no substance. The market is presented as the saviour of the environment. Environmental concern is commodified and transformed into ideological support for capitalism. Instead of raising awareness of the causes of the ecological crisis, green consumerism mystifies them. The solution is presented as an individual act rather than as the collective action of individuals struggling for social change. The corporations laugh all the way to the bank."(6)

Green consumerism does not question the fact that it is the ruling elites within capitalism that decide what to produce and how to do it. Demand is created, to a massive degree, by producers, specifically by advertising agencies that use a host of techniques to manipulate public tastes.

Due to capitalism being international, companies can produce and sell their non-"green" and dangerous goods elsewhere. Capital tends

to move to areas where it can achieve higher rates of profit. This has happened to much of Western heavy industry such as the ship building industry. Many products and practices banned in developed companies are sold and used in Third World. For example Agent Orange (which the U.S. army used to defoliate forests during the Vietnam War and which contains one of the most toxic compounds known to humanity) is used as a pesticide in the Third World as is D.T.T. Many medicines banned elswhere are distributed by multi-national companies and sold openly. For example Ciba-Geigy continued to sell Enterovioform, a drug which caused blindness and paralysis in at least 10,000 Japanese who took it, in those countries that permitted it to.

By promoting individual solutions to social problems, green consumerism is doomed to failure form the start.

Single-issue Politics

Another method of change pursued by greens are pressure groups, such as Friends of the Earth, Greenpeace, C.N.D.. These work by tackling issues one at a time. The possibilities of changing one aspect of a totally inter-related system and the belief that the pressure groups can compete fairly with multi-national companies, the military, etc for influence over decision making bodies can be seen to be false hopes. By being "apolitical" they have to accept the present anti-ecological political and economic systems and tailor their "solutions" to this system. Hence these solutions, if they get accepted by the establishment, are usually so watered down in content that no practical long term good is done.

Social problems cannot be solved as single issues. As Larry Law argues "single issue politics....deals with the issue or problem in isolation. When one problem is separated from all the other problems, a solution really is impossible. The more campaigning on an issue there is, the narrower its perspectives become....As the perspective of each issue narrows, the contradictions turn into absurdities....What single issue politics does is attend to "symptoms" but not attack the "disease" itself. It presents such issues as nuclear war, racial and sexual discrimination, poverty, starvation, pornography, etc. as if they were aberrations or faults in the system. In reality such problems are the inevitable consequence of a social order based on exploitation and hierarchical power....single issue campaigners lay their appeal for relief at the feet of the very system which oppresses them. By petitioning they

acknowledge the right of those in power to exercise that power as they choose."(7)

Single issue politics prolongs the struggle for a green society by fostering illusions that it is just parts of the capitalist system which are wrong, not the whole of it, and that those at the top of the system can, and will, act in our interests. While pressure groups do do some good practical and educational work they are limited by their very nature and cannot lead to a green world or extensive improvements in the here and now.

Green Parties

The recent emergence of Green Parties across the world is viewed by some as the hope for the future. Be it through winning seats in Parliament or local government or by pressuring other, bigger parties into taking aboard green ideas and policies through threatening their votes, some greens argue that electoral activity can produce a green society, or, at the very least, make this society greener by introducing laws that will promote sustainable economic activity and social justice as well as spreading green ideas. However, these hopes and activities are doomed to failure. Parliamentarianism is a dead end. The history of the Labour Party and European Social Democracy shows this to be the case. Fundamentally, the practice of electoralism leads to this failure. The means used, electioneering, leads inevitably to the watering down of principals in order to win votes. Even if electioneering is only used, in the beginning, to educate people, the situation always arises when principals are scarified for expediency. The lure of influence in mainstream politics soon gets the better of the party. In order to be "effective ", which means in the electoral system winning votes, original radical ideas and policies are forgotten, ignored and replaced by "practical" and "realist" ones. Winning votes soon becomes the main activity and all other activity ignored or condemned. To be "practical" becomes the party's whole reason for existing. As Oscar Wilde said, a practical idea is one which has been, or can be, implemented within the present system. Since it is the present system you object to, these ideas solve nothing. "Practical" ideas are ideas which do not (cannot) change the fundamental basis of that system. Hence "practical" ideas prove to be of little ecological or social value and just serve to keep the capitalist system going. Since capitalism is fundamentally anti-ecological, all "practical" schemes are all, to varying degrees, also anti-ecological.

Within the political party itself, parliamentarianism also tends to reinforce the centralising trends within the party structures (indeed a political party is modelled after the state). Parliamentarianism, like the state itself, is based on the premise that people cannot look after their own affairs collectively and directly and that they need a representative to make decisions for them and govern them. As such, in parliamentary and electoral activity, only the leaders are actively involved and the party membership (and the people as a whole) play a subordinate role. The main emphasis falls on the leaders and it is soon taken for granted that they should determine policy, even with democratic conferences, debates and resolutions (all of which are used to consolidate the leaders power over the party).

Electoralism tends to strengthen the leaders dominance over the party and the party's dominance over the people. Power and initiative tends to the centre, into a bureaucracy of would-be leaders, who, due to their position, soon become more interested in extending their power, influence and privileges than changing things for the better. Whatever intentions the party started out with, it soon sees getting a legal base and parliamentary power as the most important activity and so the relationship between means and ends are reversed and it is no longer parliament that serves as a means towards a green world but green ideas that are used to get influence in mainstream politics. For electoral reasons the real causes and solutions of the problems we face are mystified and rarely discussed.

The history of Labour's activities in Parliament and in government show this to be all too true. The party is dominated by its "leaders", who constantly ignore or introduce the exact opposite of conference decisions, the dropping of "principals" to further political careers and supporting or introducing policies that can only benefit the rich and powerful show that this analysis is correct. From the "revolutionary" Social Democrats in Germany supporting their military forces and state during the First World War to the recent attempts of Labour councils to hold warrent sales for non-payment of the poll-tax shows that the system changes political parties, not vice versa.

However some Green Party members refuse to face facts. While agreeing that every other political party has become corrupted by

electoralism, they maintain that the Greens (that non-existant thing, the "anti-party" party) would not be affected by this process and that they have learned the lessons of history. The recent centralisation of the Brittish Green Party (which created an executive committee with almost total power to run the affairs of the party at the same time as abandoning "cherished green principles") and the decline of the German Greens shows nothing of the kind. As Janet Biehl of the Vermont Social Ecology Project notes, "the German Greens, once a flagship for the Green movement worldwide, should now be considered stinknormal, as their de facto boss himself declares. Now a repository of careerists, the Greens stand out only for the rapidity with which the old cadre of careerism, party politics, and business-as-usual once again played itself out in their saga of compromise and betrayal of principle. Under the superficial veil of their old values - a very thin veil indeed, now - they can seek positions and make compromises to their heart's content....They have become "practical", "realistic" and "power-orinetated". This former New Left ages badly, not only in Germany but everywhere else. But then, it happened with the S.P.D. in August 1914, then why not with Die Grünen in 1991? So it did."(§) All this is the natural outcome of participation in the state, a structure based on hierarchy, authority, centralisation and elitism. The state is the organisation which minorities use to protect their priveleges and power over the masses. It cannot be the force with which to destory these priveleges.

As explained earlier, any attempts to introduce even slightly radical policies through the state will be undermined by the state bureaucracy and the capitalist class. Parliament does not completely control other state institutions. As one revolutionary anarchist made clear over a hundred years ago, "in the electoral process, the working class will always be cheated and deceived....if the did manage to send one, or ten, or fifty of them[selves to Parliament], they would become spoiled and powerless. Furthermore, even if the majority of Parliament were composed of workers, they could do nothing. Not only is there the senate, the King....,the chiefs of the armed forces, the heads of the judiciary and of the police, who would be against the parliamentary bills advanced by such a chamber and would refuse to enforce laws favouring the workers (it has happened); but furthermore laws are not miraculous; no law can prevent the capitalists from exploiting the workers; no law can

force them to keep their factories open and employ workers at such and such conditions, nor force shopkeepers to sell at a certain price, and so on."(9)

Labour governments have experienced all these problems as well as seeing any legislation it gets passed being used against the people it was designed to protect. The flight of capital that occured in the mid seventies to undermine the Labour government proved very effective in stopping Labour's moderate reforms as well as forcing it to attack the wages, benefits and conditions of the working class. This lead to the "Winter of Discontent" and Labours downfall. This, as has been explained, comes as no surprise. As Clive Ponting, an ex-civil servant, notes, "the function of a political system in any country in the world is to regulate, but not alter radically, the existing economic structure and its linked power relationships. The great illusion of politics is that politicans have the power to make whatever changes they like....On a larger canvas what real control do the politicans in any country have over the operation of the international monetary system, the pattern of world trade with its built in subordination of the third world or the operation of multi-national companies? These institutions and the dominating mechanism that underlies them - the profit motive as a sole measure of success - are essentially out of control and operating on autopilot"(10)

Electoralism also re-inforces the tendancy for people to rely on leaders to manage their affairs for them. Instead of people fighting for their own interests by their own organisations and collective strength, people look to leaders to fight on their behalf. It accustoms people to look for salvation from above and to stop struggling. It encourages apathy and a "they'll do it for us" mentality which stops effective (direct) action and the creation of liberatory social organisations (all of which are seen to be redundant due to electoralism). It also creates the illusion that the focal point for social change lies in Parliament, not in the people and their own action and organisation. As the anarcho-syndicalist Rudolf Rocker makes clear this is not the case for "governments and parliaments seldom decide on economic or social reforms on their own initiative, and where this has happened...the alleged improvements have remained a dead letter in the vast waste of laws."(11)

Only by fighting for improvements directly and forcing governments to give in have effective social reforms been created. The recent

struggle against the poll-tax shows this to be the case: parliamentarian action proved to be useless and only direct action got results. The same is true of all struggles. Parliamentarianism and Green Parties are a dead end due to their very natures. The way forward lies elsewhere.

Towards a Green Programme

As has been seen so far the present system is fundamentally anti-ecological. Green consumerism, pressure groups and Green Parties are all dead ends. This is because they all base their activity on the very structures that create the ecological crisis to begin with. They aim to reform the present system bit by bit instead of destroying it. Social revolution is the only means by which capitalism can be destroyed and a green society created in its place.

To talk about revolution may sound ridiculous, but to talk about carrying on as we are now is even more ridiculous. Capitalism, unless it is stopped, will soon make life on earth impossible. It has already disrupted many eco-systems already and the environmental and social choas it has created is getting worse. It cannot be talked to. It cannot be reformed.

Capitalism is based upon the domination of people and of nature. This inherent domination, which is the social root of the present ecological crisis, also leads to capitalism's own destruction. Where there is domination, there is resistance. This resistance, the class struggle, contains within itself the potential of social revolution. Many people refuse to acknowledge the social and class nature of the ecological problem. Instead, due to the dominate influence of capitalist ideas in our present media, education system and culture which mystifies history, class and hierarchy, people view it as "human nature" and ignore the vast differences in power between the ruling class and the working class. For example, some people can blame the famines in Africa, not on the local and international elites that control the land and distribution networks, but on the victims of this control for allowing "over population" to occur. The real causes for famines and other social and ecological problems are mystified. As Susan George in "How the other half dies" makes clear, " unless we understand how and why the poor have been sold out through the joint efforts of their own privileged countrymen and their foreign cronies we will continue to ascribe food shortages and even famines to "natural forces", "population pressure" and so forth".

As has been explained, these food shortages are the product of the capitalist class planning scarcity and the workings of the capitalist system and the developed nations domination of the Third World. There is more than enough food produced to fed everybody in the world. It is only the workings of capitalism and the actions of the ruling classes that cause famines in todays world.

The "human nature" that some people talk so much about is a direct product of the class system (it is also a good excuss not to do anything as they argue that "you cannot change human nature"). There is no such thing as an abstract "human nature". People have different views, attitudes, physchologies and world-views in different cultures, classes and historical periods. The present "human nature" is a product of capitalist society and its class relations, not vice versa.

Some greens consider "class" and "class struggle" as old-fashioned or irrelevant. This is usually due to the fact that they come from privileged backgrounds and so have a vested interest in mystifying these ideas and facts. By arguing that the environment "transcends" class (or politics) is to end up arguing that the very economic and political institutions that have created the present crisis by their very existance and workings are the only ones that can "solve" them. In the attempt to be "above" the "irrelevance" of class and to appeal to all sections of the population without respect to their economic, political or social position within society, to appear "neutral", they automatically end up siding with the powerful. As Paulo, a social theorist in the Third World, said "washing ones hands of the conflict between the powerful and the powerless means to side with the powerful, not to be neutral."

No analysis of the ecological problem is complete without consideration of the internal relations in human society. There are exploiters and exploited, rulers and ruled. Unless the green movement recognises this and bases itself on the struggle for social justice it will never achieve anything.

The "middle-class" image of the green movement is also a major problem. Unfortunately, in the rich Western countries, the image is also the reality. The privileged backgrounds of most greens allow them to dominate the movement and so allow them to mystify important ideas about such things as capitalism, class, the state, etc. This is due to their positions (real and imagined) within both society and in green organisations. They have an interest in keeping their position intact and so, fundamentally, the present economic-social status quo.

This does not mean that middle class people cannot get involved.

Unlike working class people, who, due to our needs and passion for justice which comes to us from the injustices we face, are the principal force behind any movement for social change and revolution and the guarantee that any such movement will not become just a simple change of masters, the middle classes, due to their family background, their education and their class prejudices are tied to the Establishment and tend to want the subjection of the mass of the people to their will. However, if they fuse with the working class as equals and join us without pretensions to command or without a patronising attitude, then they should be welcomed in our organisations.

This "fusing" with the working class is something that most middle-class people, particularly the "alternative" middle class, will not do and this can be seen from the green movement. Most middle class people have no idea what is like to be working class and generally view us with contempt. This is no surprise since the natural tendency of the middle class is to keep apart from the people, to form themselves into small groups and give themselves airs and to believe that they are the protectors and saviours of the masses who should follow them and maintain their privileges. They separate themselves from the working class and have illusions of fighting for the general good while they enjoy advantages and different standards. This encourages the formation of a dangerous and harmful caste within the working class or any other movement.

The key to an ecological world, as well as an effective green movement, lies in the working class and the class struggle. This does not mean that every form of domination or oppression can be reduced to being the product of capitalism and that sexism, racism, homophobia or ecocide will naturally disappear with its destruction. It does mean that the struggles against these and other oppressions must use class analysis and that any autonomous organisations created to fight them link up together and with the working class movement. The fight for human rights and the end of all oppressions is the basis of a real class conscious working class movement.

What is needed is a political theory that recognises this and bases itself and comes from the working class. A political theory that sees the importance of the class struggle and has an anti-capitalist, anti-state, ant-hierarchy and anti-parliamentarian revolutionary programme. Such a theory is communist-anarchism (also known as class-struggle anarchism).

Communist Anarchism

Communist anarchism was developed in the self-activity of working class people across the world. It was developed in, and bases itself on, the class struggle. It does not derive from the abstract reflections of an intellectual or a philosopher, but from the direct struggles of the working class against capitalism and from our needs and desires for a better world and our aspirations to liberty and equality.

Communist anarchists recognise that ecology and class struggle are totally linked. The struggle to resist the social effects of capitalism and the struggle to resist its ecological effects must be related since both problems come from the same source. The working class and the ruling class have nothing in common, including the environment.

As Murry Bookchin makes clear, "the conflict between humanity and nature is an extension of the conflict between human and human. Unless the ecology movement encompasses the problem of domination in all its aspects, it will contribute nothing toward eliminating the root causes of the ecological crisis of our time. If the ecology movement stops at mere reforms in pollution and conservation control - at mere "environmentalism" - without dealing radically with the need for an expanded concept of revolution, it will merely serve as a safety value for the existing system of natural and human exploitation."(12)

To consider that an ecological society could be based on the social and natural domination that capitalism (or any hierarchical system) creates is self-deception. To think that this system can undo its very law of life or that the ruling class can work against its own class interests in response to moral arguements or intellectual persuasion is crazy. How can the very system and the elites that run it that causes the social and ecological problems we face be the ones to solve these problems? Some parts of the ruling class see the environmental problems facing the planet getting worse but, due to their positions and the nature of the capitalist system, can do little or nothing to stop the process even if they wanted to. The ruling class face a major contradiction. The ecological crisis is the direct product of class society and its latest form capitalism. It is the very structures which gives them their power and privileges that causes the social roots of the crisis. Capitalism is out of control and the ruling classes cannot work against the system

that enriches them. As Michael Bakunin, an influential anarchist writer, makes clear, "we must distinguish clearly the prejudices of the masses of the people from those of the privileged class...the masses prejudicies are based only on their ignorance and totally oppose their very interests, while the bourgeoisie's are based on precisely on its class interests and resist counteraction by bourgeois science itself....The people want but do not know; the bourgeoisie knows but does not want. Which of the two is incurable? The bourgeoisie to be sure."(13)

The only limit to the oppression and ecocide of the state and capitalism is the power with which the people oppose them with. The class struggle is the way to a green society. Only by social revolution can capitalism be destroyed and a green world created and it is only through the class struggle can the ideas, action and organisation needed for such a revolution be generated.

The class struggle goes on all the time. It is a natural product of any class system and hierarchy. Under capitalism, it is a product of the ruling classes attempts to make profits and to keep their power and authority dominate in society. Wage cuts, bad working conditions, pollution, bad housing, service cuts, unemployment, benefit cuts and other such attacks are all the direct result of capitalists trying to keep profits high and keep the system going. Class struggle is the resistance to these attacks and the product of our needs and desires to control our own lives and for freedom and equality.

All forms of working class resistance to capitalism disrupt the routine of capitalist normality. By overcoming the practical problems involved in any struggle those involved develop collective action, solidarity, initiative, imagination and organisation. These developments, usually stifled by capitalist society, come to the fore and contain the potential to alter people's perceptions of the world around them and themselves. Thus struggle changes the political consciousness and social awareness of those involved. This can be seen, to varying degrees, whenever working class people organise and fight. The wider the struggle, the greater the possibility of the development of new, revolutionary organisations and the development of new, revolutionary ideas that aim not to reform bits of capitalism but to destroy it and all forms of oppression once and for all. People learn from struggle and anarchism bases itself on this ability.

As working class people, communist anarchists aim to influence the class struggle with our ideas as equals without seeing ourselves as "leaders". We aim to see our ideas become accepted and put onto

practice by those involved in struggle and that any social movement is anarchist in its aims and practice. We want to see the class struggle develop into a social revolution which destroys hierarchy, classes, capitalism and the state. Communist anarchists maintain that the present system can only be truely destroyed when an effective form of social organisation is created to replace it. To do this we encourage and create organisations designed to promote equality, local control, participation, individual initiative and direct decision making.

The hierarchical and statist form of organisation is best summed up as follows: It is the form of organisation where the decisions and interests of all the people in it are placed in the hands of a minority (which may or may not have been elected) who can force the disempowered majority to abid by these decisions. It is the delegation of power, and so initiative and control, into the hands of a few, a government. By having this power the governors or leaders are in a privileged position and soon form themselves into a caste or class and try to extend and strengthen that power by increasing centralization and bureaucracy within the organisation. Statist structures, being based on hierarchy and centralization, reinforce or introduce new class divisions in society. All forms of representative power will have these effects no matter how "democratic" the structures. "Democracy", electing people into positions of power, will always produce an oligrarchy (rule by a minority class) which will have economic as well as social-political privileges. This can be seen from all hierarchical organisations, such as trade unions and political parties for example, all of which produce a dominating bureaucracy with interests different from the people's at the base of the organisation.

In order to eliminate hierarchy, anarchists propose a different, anti-authoritarian form of organisation based on direct decision making without the delegation of power or the creation of power structures. Such a organisation is the free federation of free communes. A commune is made up of federated workplace and community assemblies and is based on a geographical area such as a city, town or region. In the anarchist federation, the only policy decision making body for the organisation is the mass assembly in the local community or workplace. It is here, and in the regular conferences and congresses of the assemblies and communes, that all important issues and problems are discussed and the fundamental, guiding principles of the federation debated, put into practice and

activities co-ordinated. Action committees are formed to co-ordinate and administer the decisions of the assemblies and their congresses. These are made up of mandated, recallable and temporary delegates. These bodies federate together into local, regional and international councils to discuss and workout common problems. They perform administrative work only and are mandated, subject to instant recall and their members rotated periodically to stop them becoming power structures. The basic mass assemblies can overturn any decision and withdraw from any federation as it sees fit. The assemblies can also call federal conferences of mandated, recallable delegates to discuss new developments, make rapid decisions and to inform the committees of the assemblies wishes and to instruct them what to do about these developments.

All this results in the people being in control at the base of the organisation, not their delegates. Only this form of organisation can replace government (the initiative of the few) with anarchy (the initative of all). Self-management replaces government. To those who would say that such federal organisations would produce confusion and disunity, anarchists would maintain that the statist, centralized form of organisation produces indifference instead of involvement, heartlessness instead of solidarity, uniformity instead of unity, elites instead of equality and crushes independant action. Anarchists are not opposed to co-ordination or planning, they view it as a question of how you plan and co-ordinate. Only anarchist organisation allows decision making from the bottom up which includes everyone in the process of planning, co-ordination and implementation. Only self-determination on every level of society and free agreement can develop the responsibility, initiative and solidarity of individuals and society as a whole.

Economically, anarchists want society as a whole to own and control the means of life (the land, workplaces, housing, schools, food, etc) and run them for the needs and desires of humanity and the environment. This would be done by socialisation and by direct workers and community control based on anarchist organisation . The production and distribution of goods would be based on from each according to their ability, to each according to their needs. Money and the wage system would no longer exist as would economic inequality. Thus, economically, anarchists want communism. This, obviously, has nothing in common with the systems in Eastern Europe and China which was basically another, even worse, form of

capitalism based on state control. While it may not be possible to go straight from the wage system to communism, anarchists wish all economic developments to be communistic, that is promoting equality and collective ownership and control.

Communist anarchism aims for the destruction of government and all states and capitalism by the working class organising and fighting collectively. It aims for the free association and federation (anarchy) and the social ownership and control of the means of life (communism). By the collective seizure of the land, workplaces, housing, schools and the streets and the destruction of any form of power over (or within) society, the anarchist social revolution will mean that people will control every aspect of their own lives, both individually and collectively, and so destroy the root cause of the ecological crisis, domination and hierarchy within humanity. By eliminating hierarchy, the state and capitalism, through direct action and anarchist organisation, people will be able to control what and how things are produced and so remove, through rational planning and production for need, poverty and ignorance as well as ecologically destructive economic practices. Through social and workers control, ecological production techniques can be implemented and liberatory, ecological technology introduced and developed to its full potential.

Modern technology and industry have been developed within capitalism. In order to be competitive, the means of production has to be modified and new technology developed constantly. This technology is not neutral. It was created for and exists to expand profit and capital efficiently and to control the population and workforce. To attribute our problems to "industrialism", as some greens do, is to ignore the social-economic context of the industrial system and comes from most greens lack of class analysis. Industrialisation developed since it allowed capital to accumulate faster and to increase profits. Thus, the very process of capitalism produces industrialisation, so in order to fight it, capitalism and its class system needs to be fought.

With the social control of the (present) means of life that an anarchist social revolution means, capitalist technology and industry can be replaced with a new, truely ecological, socially controlable (and understandable), decentralised, liberatory technology and energy sources. Alternative energy/technology has

been suppressed under capitalism due to its (potentially) liberatory nature. However, as resources get more expensive and the eco-crisis worse, some forms of such technology may be implemented. This, however, would be no great improvement since the social context of such technology (as important as the technology itself) would be missing and it would serve as one more attempt to save capitalism. A genuine, alternative technology can only exist, and be developed, on a widescale within a new, anarchist society.

Anarcho-syndicalism

However, communist anarchism is first and foremost a movement, a means of action. Anarchists aim to push people to demand and struggle for improvements and freedoms within capitalism and to impose themselves and take what they desire and want by their own power and collective strength. We are not opposed to the struggle for reforms under capitalism, for by fighting for small gains people can end up wanting more and more and can, through self-activity, end up seeing the need for far-reaching social change. We are opposed to reformism which sees partial reforms to the existing system as enough in themselves and that these reforms come from above by the actions of politicans or trade union bureaucrats. Malatesta sums up the anarchist position as follows, "the oppressed either ask for and welcome improvements as a benefit graciously conceeded, recognise the legitimacy of the power which is over them, and so do more harm than good by helping to slow down, or divert, and perhaps even stop the processes of emancipation. Or instead they demand and impose improvements by their action, and welcome them as partial victories over the class enemy, using them as a spur to greater achievements, and thus are a valid help and a preparation to the total overthrow of privilege, that is, for the revolution. A point is reached when the demands of the dominated class cannot be acceded to by the ruling class without compromising their power. Then the violent conflict inevitably occurs.

"It is not true to say therefore, that revolutionaries are systematically opposed to improvements, to reforms. They oppose the reformists on the one hand because their methods are less effective for securing reforms from governments and employers, who only give in through fear, and on the other hand because very often the reforms they prefer are those which not only bring doubtful immediate benefits, but also serve to consolidate the existing regime and to give the workers a vested interest in its continual existance. Thus, for instance, State pensions, insurance schemes, as well as profit sharing schemes,...etc"(14)

The present labour and green movements are totally reformist in both aims and methods. The trade unions, the base of the labour movement, are just as hierarchical and centralized as the capitalist economy or state. They are controlled at the top by a bureaucracy of very well paid officials who spend most of their time collaborating with the bosses, management and the state to control their members. The only contact they have with ordinary workers is when they are called in by management to solve disputes on the shop floor. The trade unions accept capitalism and the class system and aim only to get reforms (and to extend their influence) within the system. As well as splitting a workforce into competing (trade) organisations, trade unionism also separates politics from economic issues and organisations and urge workers to vote Labour instead of using their own collective action to further their interests directly. The trade unions and the Labour Party have constantly betrayed the working class and helped to divert the class struggle into reformist channels. It is a handicap to the working class in its day to day struggles as well as any attempt to learn from or develop the class struggle in a revolutionary way. The trade union movement has more to do with controlling workers than it has to do with workers control. Labourism needs to be replaced by a real working class movement, one that combines an economic, political and ecological outlook which aims to strengthen the class struggle both politically and organisationally. Anarcho-syndicalism is this movement.

Anarcho-syndicalism is the application of communist anarchist ideas to the labour movement. Instead of unions controlled at the top by bureaucrats, divided by trade and hopelessly compromised by reformist ideas and practices, anarcho-syndicalist unions are revolutionary organisations, fighting for better conditions in the here and now as well as aiming to create an anarchist society.

Anarcho-syndicalist unions are nothing like the present trade unions. It is organised from the bottom up, in an anarchist manner, with its decision making and power at the base. It bases itself on the class struggle and recognises that the working class and ruling class have nothing in common and fights appropriately. Decision making is done by the members themselves in workplace assemblies which unite workers across trade divisions on an industrial basis with only one union branch per workplace. Co-ordination of these assemblies is done by committees and regular conferences of mandated, temporary, non-paid delegates (not representatives)

subject to instant recall. There are no permament, full-time paid officials and the union structure is as simple and decentralised as possible.

The industrial unions are federated together locally, regionally and internationally into industry wide federations as well as into cross union federations which unite all union branches in a geographical area. This allows both industry and class wide issues and struggles to be dicussed and fought. An anarcho-syndicalist union is a combative organisation which encourages the working class, through its organisational practices, propaganda and struggles, to manage their own interests and struggles inorder to prepare it to organise and run society during and after a social revolution. It creates not only the ideas but also the facts of a new society within the shell of the old one.

It bases its struggles on working class power organised at the point of production and sees solidarity and direct action as the way to better conditions. By being decentralised, an anarcho-syndicalist union develops the initiative, responsibility and political awareness of its members and the working class as a whole to control their own struggles and to spread disputes by solidarity action and contacting other workers directly by pickets and delegates. In this manner an injury to one becomes an injury to all.

Anarcho-syndicalism does not ignore the community. The class struggle takes place everywhere, in our communities and on the streets so anarcho-syndicalism aims to create community unions, organised similiarly to and federated with the industrial unions.

The anarcho-syndicalist union confederation aims to unite all working class people and fight, using direct action, the injustices of capitalism so raising the power, consciousness and independance of its members, and the working class as a whole, by its organisation, propaganda and struggles. When disputes arise, the union sections would call general assemblies open to all workers and this assembly is the sovereign body. The confederation raises its politics and ideas in the assembly and tries to develop the class struggle towards a social revolution through which the working class as a whole collectively seizes control of their workplaces and communities and runs them in an anarcho-syndicalist manner to meet the needs of the planet and of society. By the use of direct action, anarcho-syndicalism encourages this process.

Direct action is any form of struggle in which the people involved decide upon and organise themselves which use methods which force concessions and improvements from their rulers and bosses directly, without getting intermediates to do things for them. It is any method of immediate warfare which relies on their own collective strength. As such, it forms a decisive step towards recovering the personnal and social power and control over social live that the centralised state and economic bureaucracies have taken away from the people. It incudes the strike, the boycott, sabotage, eco-tage, occupations and, when needed, insurrection.

As regards "political" or "social" issues or rights, anarcho-syndicalists believe that these can only effectively fought for and protected by direct action and economic and social organisation. Anarcho-syndicalists do not ignore politics since every economic and social conflict has a political context and aspect. We do, however, fight against capitalist and statist politics as well as electoralism since these distort, divide and oppress the working class as well as protecting the class system. We also recognise that all "rights" that exist in the law mean nothing as the state can change them as it sees fit. All rights are a product of direct action and class struggle and, as such, equality can only be protected by direct action and strong working class organisation in the economic and social level. The courts and the police only serve the ruling class.

By seeing that real power lies in organisation and direct action, anarchists see the vote for what it is and encourage absentionism. As Luigi Galleani, an Italian anarchist, explains, "the anarchists' electoral abstentionism implies not only a conception that is opposed to the principle of representation (which is totally rejected by anarchism), it implies above all an absolute lack of confidence in the State. And this distrust, which is instinctive in the working masses, is for the anarchists the result of their historical experience with the State and its function, which has, at all times and in all places, resulted in a selfish and exclusive protection of the ruling class and their privileges. Furthermore, anarchist abstentionism has consequences which are much less superficial than the inert apathy ascribed to it by the sneering careerists of "scientific socialism". It strips the State of the constitutional fraud with which it presents itself to the gullible as the true representative of the whole nation, and, in so doing, exposes its essential character as representative, procurer and policeman of the ruling classes.

"Distrust of reforms, of public powers and of delegated authority, can lead to direct action in the [class] struggles...It can determine the revolutionary character of this...action; and, accordingly, anarchists regard it as the best means for preparing the masses to manage their own personal and collective interests; and, besides, anarchists feel that even now the working people are fully capable of handling their own political and administrative interests, and, made conscious by the experience of past mistakes, they are advancing towards the ultimate forms of liberation - social revolution, economic communism, anarchy!"(15)

By organising outside of and against the parliamentary system, real international action and solidarity can be organised and achieved. By creating community unions and fighting collectively, pressing social issues like unemployment, bad housing, school closures, service cuts, pollution, low benefits and unwanted motorways or industry can be fought as well as organising the effective boycotting of anti-ecological/scab goods and companys. By creating industrial unions pollution, the making of anti-ecological goods and the use of anti-ecological production methods can be stopped as well as improving wages and working conditions. Working together, they will create effective solidarity action and extend disputes from local problems into class wide ones. Anarcho-syndicalism, by this direct and unceasing warfare with the supporters of the present system for social equality and justice, develops the ethical concepts, solidarity and responsibility of the individuals involved without which no social change or transformation can be achieved.

Anarcho-syndicalists do not reduce every struggle to just one organisation. We see the need for other autonomous organisations to raise and fight against specific issues such as sexism and racism. For example, anarcho-syndicalist women have organised "Free Women" groups in Spain, France and Britain to fight for womens equality and rights by anarcho-syndicalist means and principles. Anarcho-syndicalists have always fought fascism and in Britain work in Anti-Fascist Action. However, we see the need to link these struggles and organisations to the class struggle and for them to work with (and within) working class organisations. Such groups are no substitute for a revolutionary labour movement and unless such groups see the need for and work towards such a movement they face the danger of becoming involved in single issue politics and all that it implies.

Only by organising industrially and socially can the excesses and ecocide of capitalism be in anyway controlled in the here and now. Such organisation also creates the potential for the final elimination of class society and the creation of a green society.

Direct Action

The effectiveness of direct action as compared to political, ie electoral, action or petitioning and lobbying can be seen from recent and past struggles. The fight against the poll tax is a good example of what is possible. Although it involved mostly passive direct action (non-payment), with a steady increase of more active means of struggle (riots, stopping sherrif officiers and warrent sales, massive demonstrations), it was only by direct action that the poll tax was defeated. The Labour Party said such forms of action would be irrelevant and that only by not fighting and voting Labour in elections could the poll tax be defeated. In practice, it was the Labour Party in Parliament that proved to be irrelevant and it was Labour (and SNP, Liberal and Tory) councils that introduced the tax. It is Labour councils that have attempted poindings (usually against the elderly and single parents), tried to hold Scotlands first poll tax warrent sale and sent non-payers to jail in England and Wales. It was only by the efforts of local anti-poll tax groups and federations (which organised solidarity action) that warrent sales and the poll tax were stopped. Although dominated in some areas by "Militant" which used it to further its interests at the expense of the anti-poll tax movement as a whole, the federations (particularly the independant ones) were organised from the bottom up and were similiar to an anarcho-syndicalist federation in many ways. The anti-poll tax movement shows the potential of direct action and social-economic organisation. The influence anarchists and anarcho-syndicalists was strong in many areas and helped give the movement direction and stopped it being used as only a toy for political parties or being limited to single issue politics.

In the reformist trade unions the use of the strike, slow down, etc is the only means by which they can improve pay or conditions. Due to the position of the union bureaucrats they are loath to call such action and do so only when they have to in order to control unofficial action. It is the collective strength and action of ordinary workers that the trade unions use to gain improvements, not through the actions of bureaucrats or Labour politicans or the

"goodwill" of bosses. It is this base, which the trade unions waste, that all important improvements are won, usually by using unofficial action.

On a green level, there are a number of examples of workers taking ecological direct action. In the 1970's a number of groups of Australian workers instituted Green Bans, through which they boycotted ecological destructive projects. Builders, Seafarers, Transport, Railworkers and Dockers boycotted all work connected with the nuclear industry as well as the Franklin River Project which would have flooded the Tasmanian National Park for a large Hydro-electric project. They also blacked Amax's attempts to drill and mine for minerals on aboriginal land at Nookonbah as well as supporting the militant occupation of the site by aboriginal people. In Britain the boycott of dumping nuclear waste at sea by rank and file seafarers forced the government to abandon the policy in the 1980's. In Louisiana, workers and environmentalists formally joined forces to fight against the BASF corporation. Members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union (OCAW) were supported by members of the National Toxics Campaign when OCAW workers blocked BASF headquarters. Support for their struggle also came from other unions both locally and internationally. Since then, both the OCAW and the NTC work together to fight against toxic pollution in Southern Louisiana. In Brazil, rubber tappers have forged an alliance with native people and environmentals to oppose the massive deforestation of the Amazon rainforests by big landowners, business interests and the government. As part of their struggle they occupied the government Institute for Forestry Development office and demanded a halt to the illegal destruction of the forest. Their successes led to the murder of union activist Chico Mendes by hired assassins in 1988. Their struggle, in spite of this, continues.

Mass direct action by communities has stopped Nuclear power stations and processing facilities being built in France and Germany. Their occupations and demonstrations led to pitched battles with the police. In Renfrew, this year over 7,000 protesters marched to stop the building of a toxic waste incinerator. In Thailand, a few years ago, 100 000 people rioted to destroy a £70 million steel factory.

This is just a very small example of the effectiveness of direct action for winning ecological and social improvements. The potential

and initiative shown in these cases would be multiplied a thousand fold by a strong anarchist movement and anarcho-syndicalist unions. In the past, anarcho-syndicalist workers in Barcelona, Spain, refused to use poor materials and the weckage from old buildings in the erection of working class dewellings and stopped the building of any new prisons in the area. The anarcho-syndicalist unions organised rent strikes, anti-unemployment campaigns and supported both libertarian ("modern") schools and social centres which held classes and meetings on many social issues as well as organising both rural and urban workers and fighting for workplace and social improvements. The success of the libertarian schools led to the founder of the movement, Francisco Ferrer, being framed and shot by the Spannish government because the Catholic Church hated the schools and the teaching methods used. In some parts of Spain strikes for fellow workers in prison or in struggle were more popular than strikes for better conditions. Working class solidarity was considered the fundamental law and all strikes soon spread, often into general strikes and insurrections. It was the anarcho-syndicalist workers in the C.N.T. who started and led the armed insurrection and social revolution of July, 1936 to stop the fascist coup by the military and the right that started the Spannish Civil War. The workers and peasents socialised industry and the land and worked both for their own needs while at the same time organising workers militias to try to free the third of Spain controlled by Franco. An extensive rationalisation of industry was organised to reduce waste, extensive education and health programs created and the land worked in common in order to eliminate poverty, ignorance and class society. This was all done by ordinary people without leaders or politicans. It only failed due to the actions of the Communist Party, the western democracies and the support the fascists recieved from the international ruling classes of both the fascist and democratic states.

In Italy, in 1920, the workers in the engineering factories organised a stay in strike which developed into the beginnings of a social revolution. Other industries responded and soon production was started based on workers control. Railway and road transport workers moved the finished goods, food was provided by workers in bakeries and mills and in peasant organisations. Post and telephone workers maintained communications among the factories occupied. The military, police and fascists were powerless in the face of the

collective power of the working class. In the areas and factories active in the movement there existed a large anarchist and anarcho-syndicalist minority which helped organise, spread and influence it, but the reformist unions and the Socialist Party isolated and betrayed the workers and persuaded them to hand the factories back to the bosses and return to work inspite of the arguements of the anarcho-syndicalists in the U.S.I. (which had 800 000 members) and the anarchists in the U.A.I.. This and other actions by the reformists lead to Mussolini and the fascists seizing power inspite of the action of the U.S.I. or the U.A.I.

In Germany in 1919, armament workers in the anarcho-syndicalist union the F.A.U. resolved to convert their plants to other uses and to stop arms production. The ban lasted two years until broken by the actions of the reformist trade unions.

Anarch-syndicalist organisations have also put considerable energy into anti-militarist propaganda in order to keep rank and file soldiers loyal to their class and so prevent them shooting at or breaking up strikes or demonstrations. They have also organised against war and conscription. During the Gulf War, the rank and file workers committees (the COBAS) and the Italian Syndicalist Union (the U.S.I.) organised demonstrations and strike action in an attempt to stop the war, as did the Spannish and French C.N.T.'s. All anarcho-syndicalist groups campaigned against the war, urging people to fight the class war, not capitalist wars.

In Italy, near Carrara (an anarchist stronghold for over 100 years) 500 people successfully blockaded roads to stop the dumping of lead polluted waste from the marable quarries in 1990. In Manfredonia (also in Italy), the arrival of a chemical waste ship led to a successful mass revolt which included demonstrations, street blockades, a general strike and the storming of the Town Hall. The poison ship was forced to leave the area by this action.

Farmers in the Philippines in 1988, organised in the radical KMU unions, used direct action to save rainforest areas by forcing the government to cancel the timber licence of the logging company destroying the rainforest and to order reforestation plans. The KMU says it "draws inspiration from the Haymarket martyrs in Chicago" who were anarchist union leaders hanged because of their work in the unions and the eight hour day movement.

Redwood Summer, organised by the Deep Ecologists of Earth First! and

the revolutionary industrial union the I.W.W., aims to organise lumberjacks and local people and use direct action to protect the Redwood forests in California. The campaign was so successful that two I.W.W. organisers were blown up in their car in an attempt to stop it. The police arrested the bomb victims and tried, unsuccessfully, to frame them. Redwood Summer continues.

Anarcho-syndicalist unions are trying to stop junk mail by the use of direct action in the Post Office in France and other countries.

As can be seen, anarcho-syndicalist activity leads effective and far reaching struggles as well as the potential for a new world. These examples are just a very small example of the potential of revolutionary unionism. The Direct Action Movement exists to increase the influence of anarcho-syndicalist ideas and to encourage the creation of revolutionary unions in Britain. The D.A.M. is the British section of the anarcho-syndicalist International Workers Association (I.W.A.) which unites revolutionary unions and anarcho-syndicalist propaganda groups across the globe, from Brazil to Norway and from the U.S.A. to Japan.

The D.A.M.-I.W.A. aims to increase the influence of anarcho-syndicalist ideas firstly by its own propaganda and activity and, secondly, by the creation of Industrial Networks.

Industrial Networks

Industrial networks are discussed more fully in the D.A.M. pamphlet "Winning the Class War: an anarcho-syndicalist strategy". This is a brief introduction.

An industrial network would initially be a political grouping in the economic sphere which aims to create an anarcho-syndicalist union. In the short term they aim to build a positive organisation through which workers can set their own agenda. They will encourage genuine grass roots activity in the workplace. Being anarcho-syndicalist they recognise that most trade unions organise away from the workplace and so they aim to organise and agitate there, on the shop floor, and not in the trade union branch since trade unions cannot be reformed. It is in the workplace that most issues are really discussed, disputes start and where workers power lies.

An industrial network is open to all workers who share its aims and principles. They would be based on anarcho-syndicalist ideas and try to encourage debate in the workplace about both industrial and social issues and ideas as well as organising to tackle such issues. By organising and stimulating debate they will also break the trade

union bureaucracy's iron grip on information and promote communication between different workplaces and industries.
They aim, in accordance with anarcho-syndicalist principles, to encourage general workplace activity, such as workplace meetings, strike committees and direct action, outside of the control of political parties or the trade unions. They will organise all people in an industry, for example the education network organises students, cleaners, lecturers, office staff, etc in one group, and encourage direct control of all disputes by those involved. They will also try to develop the general class struggle along anti-capitalist, anti-state lines and towards an anarcho-syndicalist influenced social revolution.
The aim, to sum up, is to create a framework for militant workers to discuss issues and to organise a fighting organisation at the forefront of raising such issues at work. The networks would be the means of bringing revolutionary politics into the everyday struggle. The social and ecological disruptions of capitalism can also be fought as the workplace is the heart of the capitalist system. It is there capital is produced and acculumated by exploitation and it is there that crippling blows can be dealt it and its eco-cidal practices. The class struggle exists outside the workplace and anarcho-syndicalists also aim to organise and fight in the community as well.
By organising community and industrial groups people, instead of being isolated individuals, will be in a position to take control of their own lives and so create a power that can create a green society. A society that lives in harmony with nature because it lives in harmony with itself. A world without war, famine, poverty, crime, bigotry and environmental destruction and the class systems that are their causes. A world of free and equal individuals living together in ecological communities.

Conclusion

The way towards a green society lies in the class struggle and anarcho-syndicalism. In order to be effective in the here and now, people concerned about the environment should become anarcho-syndicalists and link the ecological destruction of capitalism with its social roots and fight both. The injustices and ecocide of capitalist society can only be reduced by organising and fighting the class struggle where we are strongest, in our workplaces and

communities. As one participant of the near revolutionary uprising in France in 1968 makes clear, "at least one lesson has been learned: what was missing was not a small party which could direct a large mass; what was missing was the consciousness and confidence on the part of the entire working population that they could themselves direct their social activity. If the workers had possessed this consciousness on the day they occupied their factories, they would have proceeded to expropriate their exploiters; in the absence of this consciousness, no party could have ordered the workers to take the factories into their own hands. What was missing was class consciousness in the mass of the working population, not the party discipline of a small group. And class consciousness cannot be created by a closed, secret group but only by a vast, open movement which develops forms of activity which aim openly to subvert the existing social order by eliminating the servant-mentality from the entire working population"(16)

We in the Direct Action Movement and the International Workers Association aim to develop such a movement. It will be a long process, but worth it in the end. Capitalism is destroying our planet and making everyday life increasingly impossible. It has to be stopped. Join us, we have a world to win.

Footnotes

1. Murry Boochin, Towards an Ecological Society, p66
2. Errico Malatesta, Anarchy, p21
3. Quoted by R. Lynn, Vote: What For?, p2
4. Errico Malatesta, Anarchy, p22-23
5. Errico Malatesta, Anarchy, p21
6. Andrew Watson, From Green to Red, p9-10
7. Larry Law, Bigger Cages, Longer Chains, p17-20
8. Janet Biehl, Greenline no.89, p14
9. S.Merlino, quoted by L. Galleani, The End of Anarchism?, p13
10. Clive Ponting, quoted in Alternatives no.5, p10
11. R. Rocker, Anarcho-syndicalism, p51
12. Murry Bookchin, Towards an Ecological Society, p43
13. M. Bakunin, From out of the Dustbin, p101
14. Errico Malatesta, Life and Ideas, ed V. Richards, p81-82
15. L. Galleani, The End of Anarchism?, p13-14
16. F. Perlman, Worker-Student Action Committees, p22

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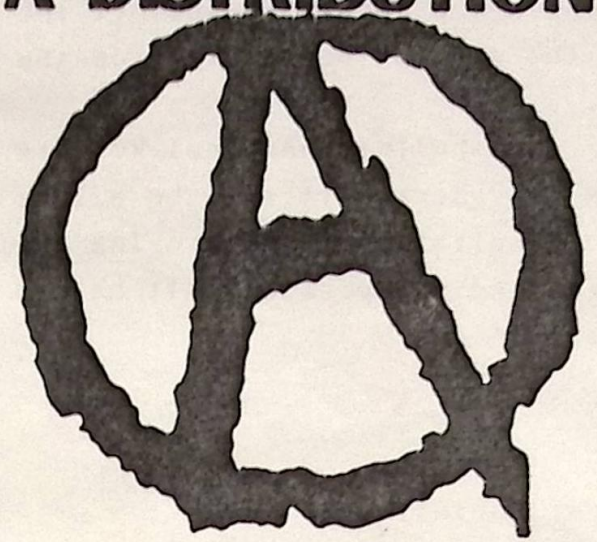

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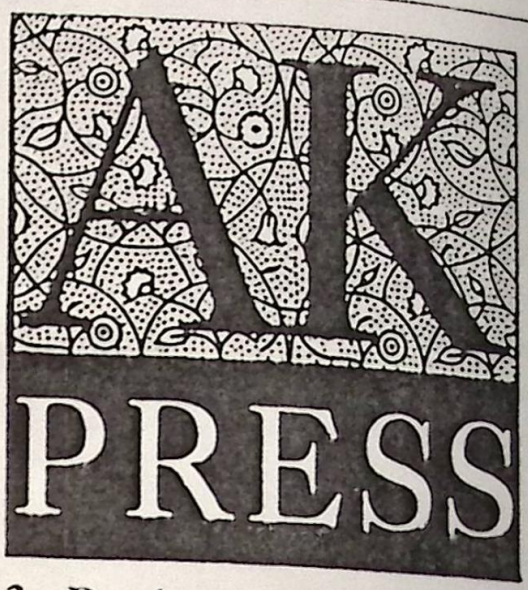

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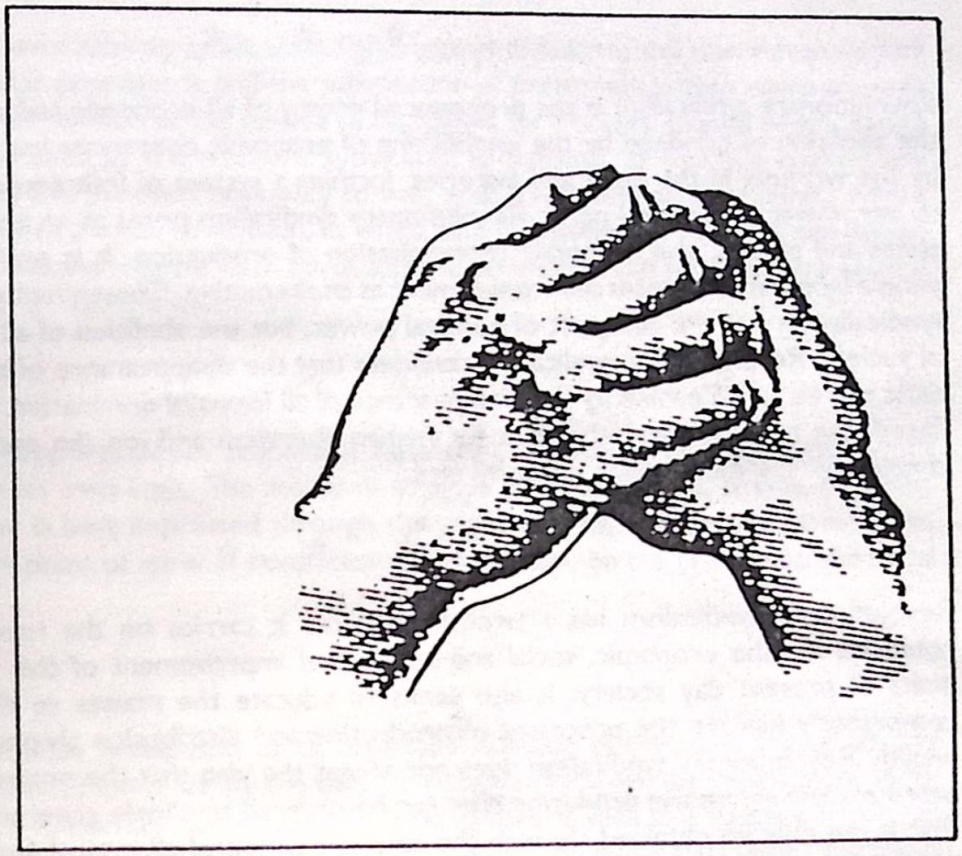
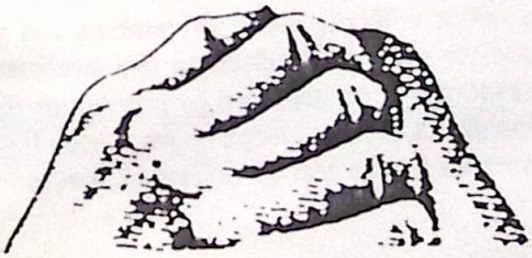
THE PRINCIPLES OF REVOLUTIONARY SYNDICALISM





THE PRINCIPLES OF REVOLUTIONARY SYNDICALISM

Revolutionary syndicalism is based on the class struggle and holds that all workers must unite in economic combative organisations. These organisations must fight for liberation from the double yoke of capital and the state. Its goal is the reorganisation of social life on the basis of libertarian communism, which will be achieved by the revolutionary action of the working class. Considering that only the economic organisations of the proletariat are capable of reaching this objective, revolutionary syndicalism addresses itself to workers in their capacity as producers, as creators of social wealth, so that it will take root and develop among them in opposition to the modern workers' parties, which it declares inept for the economic reorganisation of society.

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Revolutionary syndicalism is the pronounced enemy of all economic and social monopoly. It aims at the abolition of privilege by the establishing of economic communes and administrative organs run by the workers in the fields and factories, forming a system of free councils without subordination to any power or political party. Revolutionary syndicalism poses as an alternative to the politics of states and parties, the economic reorganisation of production. It is opposed to the governing of people by others and poses self-management as an alternative. Consequently, the goal of revolutionary syndicalism is not the conquest of political power, but the abolition of all state functions in the life of society. Revolutionary syndicalism considers that the disappearance of the monopoly of property must also be accompanied by the disappearance of all forms of domination. Statism, however camouflaged, can never be an instrument for human liberation and, on the contrary, will always be the creator of new monopolies and privileges.

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Revolutionary syndicalism has a twofold function. It carries on the revolutionary struggle in all countries for the economic, social and intellectual improvement of the working class within the limits of present day society. It also seeks to educate the masses so that they will be able to competently manage the processes of production and distribution through the socialisation of all wealth. Revolutionary syndicalism does not accept the idea that the organisation of a social system based exclusively on the producing class can be ordered by simple governmental decrees. It affirms that it can only be obtained through the common action of all manual and intellectual workers, in every branch of industry, by self-management, in such a way that every region, factory or branch of industry is an autonomous member of the economic organism and systematically regulates, on a determined plan and on the basis of mutual agreement, the production and distribution processes according to the interests of the community.

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Revolutionary syndicalism is opposed to all organisational tendencies inspired by the centralism of the state and church. These can only prolong the survival of the state and authority and they systematically stifle the spirit of initiative and any independence of thought. Centralism is the artificial organisation which subjects the so-called lower classes to those which claim to be superior. Centralism leaves the affairs of the whole community in the hands of a few — the individual being turned into a robot with regulated movements and gestures. In the centralised organisation, the necessities of society are subordinated to the interests of a few, variety is replaced by uniformity and personal responsibility is replaced by unanimous discipline. It is for this reason that revolutionary syndicalism founds its social conception on a wide federalist organisation, an organisation which works from the bottom to the top by uniting all forces in the defense of common ideas and interests.

Revolutionary syndicalism rejects all parliamentary activity and all collaboration with legislative bodies. It holds that even the freest voting system cannot bring about the disappearance of the clear contradictions at the centre of present day society. The parliamentary system has only one goal: to lend a pretence of legitimacy to the reign of falsehood and social injustice.

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Revolutionary syndicalism rejects all arbitrarily created political and national frontiers and declares that what is called nationalism is the religion of the modern state, behind which is concealed the material interests of the ruling classes. Revolutionary syndicalism recognises only economic and regional differences and demands for all groups the right to self-determination without exception.

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It is for these reasons that revolutionary syndicalism fights against militarism and war. Revolutionary syndicalism adovcates anti-war propaganda and the substitution of permanent armies which are only the instruments of counter-revolution at the service of capitalism, by workers' militias which, during the revolution, will be controlled by the workers' syndicates; it demands, as well, the boycott and embargo of all raw materials and products necessary to war, with the exception of a country where the workers are in the midst of a social revolution, in which case it is necessary to help them defend the revolution. Finally, revolutionary syndicalism advocates the preventive and revolutionary general strike as a means of opposing war and militarism.

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Revolutionary syndicalism supports direct action and supports and encourages all struggles which are not in contradiction to its own ends. The means of struggle are: occupations, strikes, boycotts, sabotage, etc. Direct action is best expressed through the general strike. The general strike must, at the same time, from the point of view of revolutionary syndicalism, be the prelude to the social revolution.

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While revolutionary syndicalism is opposed to all organised violence of the state, it realises that there will be extremely violent clashes during the decisive struggles between the capitalism of today and the free communism of tomorrow. Consequently, it recognises as valid that violence which can be used as a means of defence against the violent methods used by the ruling class during the social revolution. As expropriations of the land and the means of production can only be carried out and brought to a successful conclusion by the direct intervention of the workers' revolutionary economic organisations, defence of the revolution must also be the task of the economic organisations. Defence of the revolution is not the task of a military or quasi-military body developing independently of these economic organisations.

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It is only through the economic and revolutionary organisations of the working class that it will be possible to bring about the liberation and necessary creative energy for the reorganisation of society on the basis of libertarian communism.

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The international bond of struggle and solidarity which unites the revolutionary syndicalist organisations of the world is called the International Workers' Association (IWA).

ENDS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE IWA

The IWA has as its aims:

a To organise and press for revolutionary struggle in all countries with the aim of destroying once and for all the present political and economic regimes and to establish a libertarian communist society.

b To give a regional and industrial base to the economic syndicalist organisations and, where that already exists, to strengthen those organisations which are determined to fight for the destruction of capitalism and the state.

c To prevent the infiltration of any political party into the economic syndicalist organisations and to combat with resolution every attempt at political domination within the unions.

d Where circumstances demand it, to establish through a given program which is not in contradiction with the above, provisional alliances with other revolutionary and working class organisations, with the objective of planning and carrying out common international actions in the interest of the working class. Such alliances must never be with political parties and with organisations that accept the state as a system of social organisation.

e To unmask and combat the arbitrary violence of all governments against revolutionaries dedicated to the cause of social revolution.

f To examine all problems concerning the world proletariat in order to consolidate and develop movements which defend the rights and new conquests of the working class the world over.

g To undertake shows of solidarity in the event of important economic struggles against the declared or concealed enemies of the working class.

h To give moral and material support to the working class movements whose management is in the hands of the workers themselves.

The International only intervenes in the affairs of a union when its affiliated organisation requests it or when this submits to the general decision of the International.

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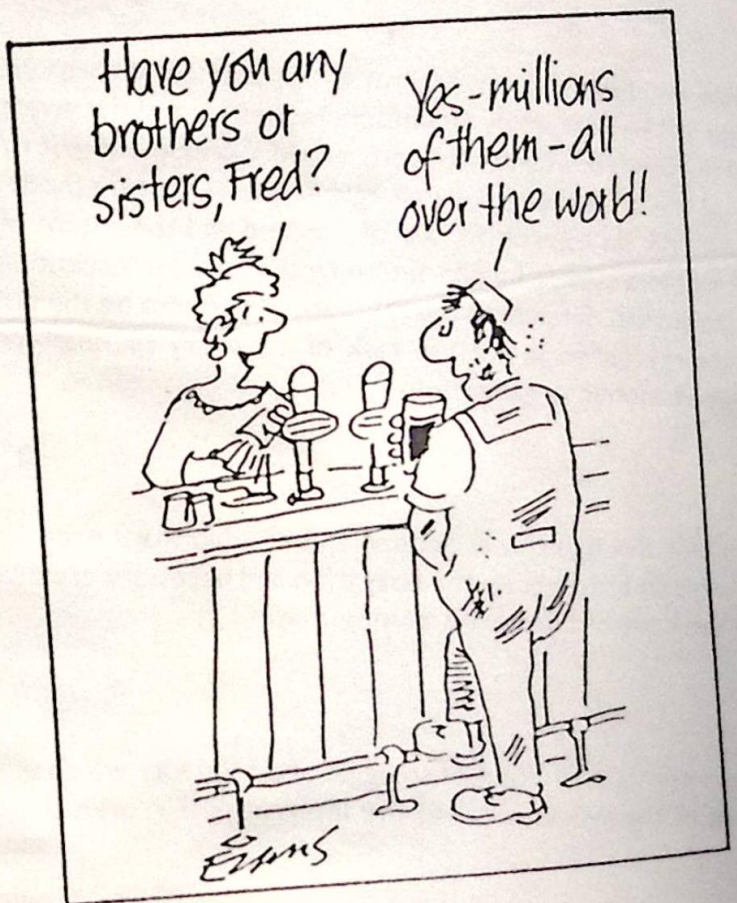

DAM-IWA AIMS AND PRINCIPLES

1. The Direct Action Movement is a working class organisation.

2. Our aim is the creation of a free and classless society.

3. We are fighting to abolish the state, capitalism and wage slavery in all their forms and replace them by self-managed production for need, not profit.

4. In order to bring about the new social order, the workers must take over the means of production and distribution. We are the sworn enemies of those who would take over on behalf of the workers.

5. We believe than the only way for the working class to achieve this is by independent organisation in the workplace and the community and federation with others in the same industry and locality, independent of and opposed to all political parties and trade union bureaucracies. All such workers' organisations must be controlled by the workers themselves and must unite rather than divide the workers movement. Any and all delegates of such workers' organisations must be subject to immediate recall by the workers.

6. We are opposed to all states and state institutions. The working class has no country. The class struggle is worldwide and recognises no artificial boundaries. The armies and police of all states do not exist to protect the workers of those states, they exist only as the repressive arm of the ruling class.

7. We oppose racism, sexism, militarism and all attitudes and institutions that stand in the way of equality and the right of all people everywhere to contril their own lives and environment.

8. The Direct Action Movement is resolved to initiate, encourage and wholeheartedly support the creation of independent workers' unions based on the principles of anarcho-syndicalism.

9. The Direct Action Movement is a federation of groups and individuals who believe in the principles of anarcho-syndicalism: a system where the workers alone control industry and the community without the dictates of politicians, bureaucrats, bosses and so-called experts.

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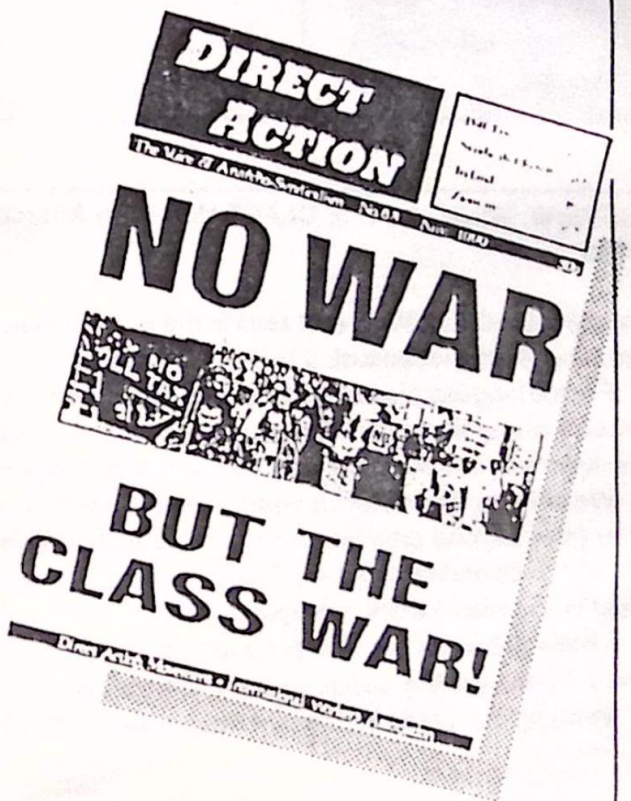
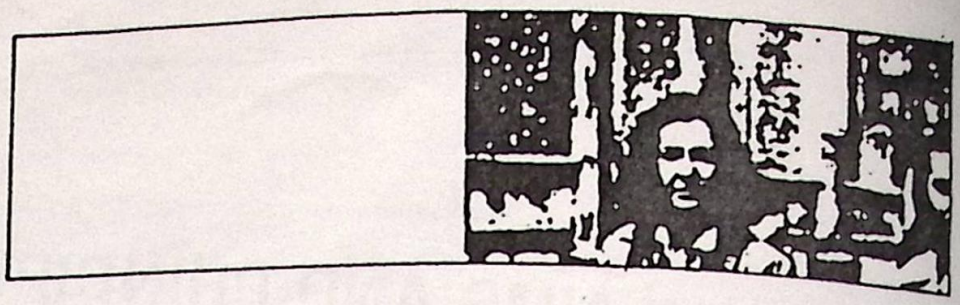
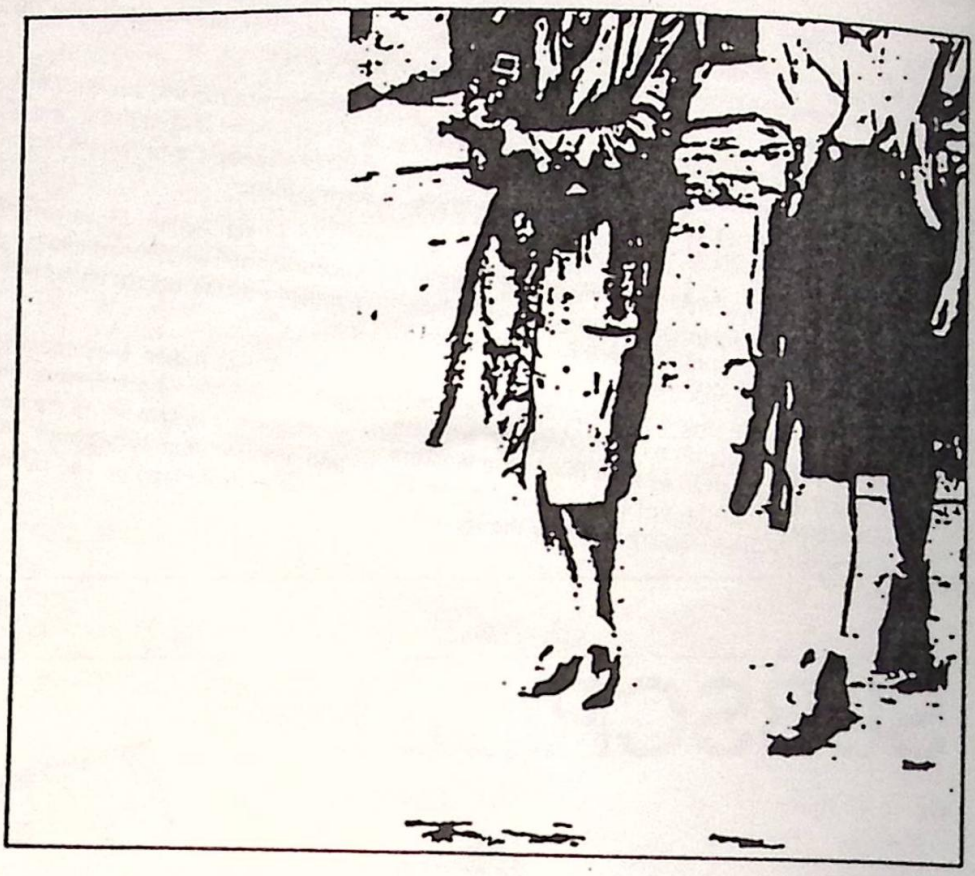




WINNING THE CLASS WAR



REVIEW: WINNING THE CLASS WAR: An Anarcho-Syndicalist Strategy by the Direct Action Movement.

Winning the Class War, as it says in the introduction, is not a blueprint for the creation of a revolutionary working class movement. It is though, the first step of such a movement to the public.

For too long our class initiatives and actions have been hijacked, *Winning the Class War* clearly states what is wrong with current organisations which purport to be working class and how activity within the workplace is attacked not only by the bosses, but also by the bosses in the unions.

We all know the system is wrong, we don't need books and pamphlets to tell us that. *Winning the Class War* goes beyond criticism to consider the idea of networks as a means of bringing a new society, and an end to capitalism, closer. These networks cut across all false divisions created to divide us - trade, paid work/unpaid work, workplace activity/local activity.

These networks are non-hierarchical, they are a means of taking control and responsibility for our lives. These are the seeds which will grow into a formidable force for change.

Winning the Class War is a valuable tool in the fight to destroy capitalism.

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Towards a Green Society

Recently the environmental crisis facing our planet has become better known. This pamphlet does not describe the effects of the crisis. It investigates the causes of them as well as discussing how to solve both the causes and their effects. It discusses the various proposals for ecological change and shows their limitations. It advocates anarcho-syndicalism as the only effective theory and organisation to solve the social and ecological problems facing humanity. Read it with an open mind and heart, consider its arguments and alternatives and act as you see fit.

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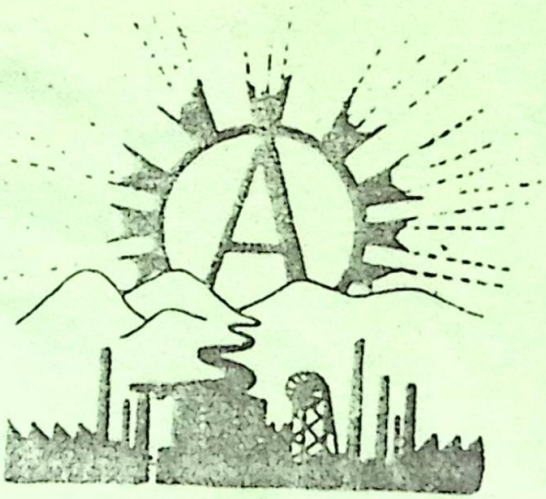
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